

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A sortation assembly for sorting articles, said sortation assembly comprising:
first and second straight sections;
a plurality of chutes movable along said first and second straight sections in a continuous loop, each of said straight sections including a plurality of sort stations along at least one side, said chutes being movable along and over said plurality of sort stations of both straight sections, said chutes being operable to deposit articles to bins or trays positioned at said sort stations; and
a curved connecting section which guides said plurality of chutes between said first and second straight sections.
2. The sortation assembly of claim 1, wherein said curved connecting section includes an outer curved track and an inner curved track along which said chutes are moved.
3. The sortation assembly of claim 1, wherein said straight sections are oriented generally orthogonal to one another, such that said sortation assembly is formed in a generally L-shaped pattern, said curved connecting section providing approximately a 90 degree bend in the travel path of said chutes.
4. The sortation assembly of claim 1, wherein said straight sections are oriented generally parallel to one another, such that said sortation assembly is formed in a generally U-shaped pattern.
5. The sortation assembly of claim 4, wherein said curved connecting section comprises one of a single approximately 180 degree curved connecting section and two approximately 90 degree curved connecting sections between said straight sections.
6. The sortation assembly of claim 1 including a plurality of inducts at one end of one of said first and second straight sections.

7. The sortation assembly of claim 1 including a plurality of inducts at both ends of said sortation assembly.

8. The sortation assembly of claim 1 including one or more inducts at said curved connecting section.

9. A method for extending a sortation assembly, said method comprising:

providing first and second generally straight sections of a sortation assembly, each of said first and second generally straight sections having a plurality of sort stations therealong;

providing a curved section between said first and second generally straight sections,
5 said sortation assembly having a plurality of chutes for moving in a generally continuous loop around said generally straight sections and said curved section, said chutes being mounted to a drive member;

moving said chutes along said first and second generally straight sections and along
said curved section via said drive member, said chutes being spaced along said drive member
10 a sufficient amount to allow said chutes and said drive member to curve along said curved section without contact or interference occurring between adjacent ones of said chutes; and
depositing articles in said chutes to bins or trays positioned at said sort stations.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said drive member comprises a chain.

11. The method of claim 10 including providing or spacing said chutes along said chain at an increased pitch or separation distance to allow for said chutes to curve along said curved section.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein said curved section includes an outer curved track and an inner curved track for moving said chutes and said drive member therealong.